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ON THE RIGHT:**Prayermongering
Against Goldwater**

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By WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

THE REV. WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN JR., chaplain, is best described, I suppose, as Yale University's Milton Galamison, the two gentlemen having in common a dedication to the proposition that no act of intolerance or narrow-mindedness is inexcusable or uncharitable if it has to do with promoting revolutionary activity in behalf of instant integration.



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Dr. Coffin's message has during the last period taken on a highly partisan formulation, namely, Hate Goldwater. He doesn't put it quite that way. As a resourceful divine he has unearthed a Christian formulation: Pray for his defeat. Well why shouldn't a Yale divine pray for the defeat of Goldwater? No earthly reason at all; but there is, I believe, a reason why prayermongering against Goldwater ought not to be chargeable to the public treasury.

The lead story in the opening-day issue of the Yale Daily News reverently divulges the Reverend's Summer activities. "William Sloane Coffin Jr.," the story says, "Yale's partisan prophet, for the past five weeks has been urging university audiences across India to pray every night, to whomever they pray" (Dr. Coffin would never be guilty of suggesting to a Hindu audience that God might be so intolerant as to be a Christian) "that Barry Goldwater will not be elected."

"Just returned," the story continues, "from a State Department-sponsored speaking tour, he said Goldwater-phobia eclipsed even indignation over the U.S. race issue among his audiences. Accompanied by his wife, Dr. Coffin was in India at the invitation of U.S. Ambassador Chester Bowles, who asked him to tour the university circuit as something of an expert on American racial unrest. Through five weeks of three or four discussions each day, the Yale chaplain hit on three themes: race, the University and the social order, and Barry Goldwater."

Now just conceivably the Supreme Court might rule that if an agent of the State Department—that is what Dr. Coffin was during the period when his salary and expenses were being paid by the U.S. Government—merely asks for prayers in behalf of one political candidate, he is not taking an official role in a political campaign.

But then the laws of this country are old-fashioned, and one supposes that to go abroad and pray publicly for the defeat of Goldwater, if done at the expense of the U.S. Treasury, might be construed as the equivalent of going abroad and urging the defeat of Goldwater in secular terms.

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GRANTED THE INDIANS don't vote in American elections. But will everyone take it for granted their prayers will go unheard? Everyone, one supposes, who meditates on the fact that all their America-oriented prayers have got for them over the years is Kenneth Galbraith and Chester Bowles.

Some of us will perhaps pray, to whomever we pray, that the relevant committee of Congress will call in the State Department and ask the relevant officials whence they received the authority to send over to India a Democratic hawker on official business? Did they get that authority from whatever God they pray to? While we are at it, we may as well find out who He is, and how He squares off to the First Amendment of the United States, and when did He repeal Title 5 of the U. S. Code, Chapt. 1, Sect. 1181, Para. a.

The essay on "How Dr. Coffin spent his Summer Vacation" was not enough for a single issue of the Yale Daily News. Another dispatch carried an injunction by President Kingman Brewster of Yale to matriculating freshmen, in which he initiated them quickly into the modern meaning of academic freedom.

"Take the measure of your misgivings, and mine," said Brewster, "about some of those who would purport to be qualified to lead the world's most favored nation. It is the hope of our country that educated men will not permit oversimplification to be mistaken for clarity; that they will not let recklessness masquerade as courage."

Dried out, that means: Vote for LBJ. Brewster is a genial and intelligent human being, and once in bygone years I had dinner at Yale with him and Senator Goldwater, who was equally impressed by Brewster's hospitality, so much so that the Senator permitted himself a reckless oversimplification by writing to an official of Yale University that he saw no tendency at Yale, during his stay there, towards dogmatic liberalism. Evidently Brewster, appalled by Senator Goldwater's obtuseness during his stay at Yale, during his stay there, towards dogmatic liberalism. Evidently Brewster, appalled by Senator Goldwater's obtuseness during his stay at Yale, during his stay there, towards dogmatic liberalism.